

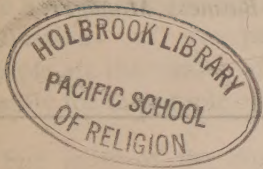
# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● MAY 1977

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# Remembering Asia

We are members of a church in Asia, a vast continent of 56 countries. It is a continent with enormous resources, a rich history and is the cradle of ancient civilizations. Asia is a continent of contradictions and complexities.

Out of a total world population of 4 billion, 2.4 billion live in Asia. It is stated that though Asia has only 20% of the land area in the world yet it has 56% of the population. It is calculated that four babies are born into the world at every tick of the clock, out of whom three are Asians. It is estimated that by the end of the century there will be 4 billion people living in Asia alone. Certainly this will affect the various plans and programmes of the governments to contain inflation, to increase literacy, to combat pollution and to control population. There has been much talk about planned parenthood, family welfare etc. We have learnt that coercion and slogans do not bring the desired results. We have decided to concentrate on the 'motivation and education' of the people. People are important. People are the wealth of Asia. Rightly our concern is mainly for the people of Asia.

For most of the countries in Asia the per capita annual income is less than \$ 500. A vast majority of them live below the poverty line and whose per capita annual income is less than \$ 50. At the same time Japan, an Asian country, is at present one of the richest countries in the world, with a per capita annual income of about \$ 4,000. 'The rich get richer—the poor get children' aptly describes the Asian situation. The relentless and grinding poverty has in its clutches the vast masses of our people.

Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, besides some other religions, have emanated from Asia. People belong not only to these ancient religions but also to the modern and new ones like *Soka Gakkai* of Japan or Mr. Moon's Church of Unification in Korea. It is stated that over 1,700 couples were married at the same ceremony on the same day in the Unification Church. Unlike some other continents, religion plays an important part in the lives of the people of Asia. Religion still has a powerful hold on the people. Obviously there is a need to relate their faith to their day to day life. The consequence of belonging to a religion is not alienation from this world but to be provided with Faith



and courage to face life and with the principles governing one's life style. These lead on to the care and concern for others. Asian people are governed by various kinds of democracies. There are also totalitarian regimes as well as monarchies. Politically and economically different methods are pursued for governing and improving the conditions of the people. In spite of political independence during the last two or three decades the multi-national corporations as well as the Western nations continue to have tremendous power and influence over the people of Asia.

The Christians are part of these and many other contradictions in the lives of the people in Asia. The Christians are less than 5% of the total population of Asia. The Church of South India along with 78 Churches and 16 National Christian Councils from 17 countries is a member of the Christian Council of Asia. Along with 40 million Christians we will be remembering the people of Asia in our prayers on Sunday the 22nd May. What does it mean for the church to proclaim Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour in Asia today? Unfortunately, the church in many instances and in many countries is identified with the Establishment. How can the church be a creative minority? Obviously it is imperative on the part of the Churches to be united. Besides our work of 'charity' and service, what are the points at which the church can identify itself with the poor and the powerless? It is our continuing responsibility. No more can the church live and serve through its institution in isolation. The church in every country is a part of the aspirations and longings of the people. Three official delegates of the church besides others will be part of the 400 members who will assemble in Penang, from 31st May to 9th June for the Sixth Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia. *Jesus Christ in Asian Suffering and Hope* is the theme of the conference. Our hope and prayer is that we will join together, study, pray and act individually and as congregations in bringing hope to the people of Asia.



# Towards a new style in Theological Learning

(Extracts from the Annual Report of the Principal of Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Arasaradi)

A new prospectus for the seminary with a new integrated curriculum entitled, 'Towards a new style in theological learning' has been prepared. What does this new style that we are attempting to evolve at Arasaradi imply?

First of all, a remark about the word 'new'. It is not new in the sense, that we at Arasaradi are the first to attempt this. Many theological colleges all over the world particularly in Asia have been experimenting many of the things that we are doing here. We cannot claim that we are doing something that nobody else has done. But it is new in the sense that it is *new for us* i.e. new for those of us who are involved in theological education in Tamil Nadu. It is new, because we have discovered it afresh for ourselves; It is new, refreshingly new, as we continue to discover it through our study of God's word, through our commitment to Christ and through the inspiration of Christ's disciples greater than ourselves.

This style of theological education which we have in our vision has four elements: 1. A new style of spirituality. 2. A new style of living. 3. A new style of learning. 4. A new style of ministering.

## A new style of spirituality

Christian spirituality has recently become a vital theme for study and discussion. 'Combat spirituality' and 'involvement spirituality' are terms coined at the Nairobi assembly of the World Council of Churches. Since Nairobi there is great interest among theological circles for evolving an authentic form of Christian spirituality. A truly Christian spirituality is one that enables Christians to be firmly rooted in Christ, integrally related to the fellowship of the church and redemptively involved in the world. It is a commitment spirituality which seeks total obedience to Christ and therefore receives a total freedom to be involved in the world. It is the spirituality which gives us sustaining power through the struggles and uncertainties of involvement and at the same time the joy and freedom that belongs to God's children. It is the spirituality which knows the experience and the continuing need of forgiveness of sins and assurance of justification. A spirituality that stresses only prayer and withdrawal from the world is not truly Christian, because that was not Jesus' spirituality. His was a spirituality of devotion and action. It is this type of spirituality that we want to foster in the seminary.

Therefore we have included commitment as one of the four basic areas in the curriculum. For, commitment and reflection do go together, without reflection commitment can deteriorate to fanaticism and dogmatism and without commitment, reflection can wander on to scepticism and speculation. Students come to the seminary with a certain amount of commitment to Christ, and with a sense of call. The seminary encourages them to grow in this commitment through programmes of regular morning worship, (begins with quiet time at 6.30 a.m.) and evening worship, daily intercession, weekly communion service, fellowship groups, prayer cells, quiet days and retreats, personal counselling and discipline.

Attempt is also made to discover a specifically Indian Christian spirituality, appropriating certain devotional exercises and values in the Indian tradition. Sister Betty Paul used in her quiet day talks some pictures of Christ's suffering depicting the stations of the cross in an Indian style. Bishop Sundaresan's seminars on Christian Yoga have created sufficient interest that some students continue to use these for their personal devotions.

Worship and devotional life continue to be central to the seminary life, uniting learning and living, as the chapel symbolically connects the classrooms and the hostel.

## A new style of living

Personal styles of living in the campus vary a good deal. In dress, one finds tight pants and veshtis, guru shirts and safari slacks! In appearance, you will find clean shaven faces and long grown beards! In standards of living, different levels of simplicity and affluence are manifest. I am not referring to these! What we are seeking is a style of living at a deeper level for the community conducive to theological enterprise and in accordance with our theological convictions.

In a community where incomes vary among students, servants and staff, we ask ourselves, how can we be a sharing and caring community? In addition to the different projects to care for the less privileged of the community, we have this year introduced the community shared meal on Sunday evenings. All members, pay three per cent of their income and participate in a common meal once a week on Sundays. Once a week is only a token for real sharing and we eventually want to extend it to one meal every day. But the purpose is clear; we want to develop a style of community life where inequalities are reduced to the minimum.

If you have time you walk across to the slum to go to the houses where five of our students have chosen to live in more or less the same style as the friends who always have to live there—no cots, no tables, no electricity, no comforts, etc. We hear of complaints from churches that trained candidates do not like to go to villages because of less comfortable environment there, compared to that of the urban. This is no more totally true. The other day, a list went up calling for volunteers for slum work for next year and more than thirty students had signed up. Some members of staff are contemplating to go and live in the farm, where students now live and work among the villages. These students cycle up every day about 15 km to come to classes. One student lives with the poor people in the Inba Illam, and another at the Unemployed Young People's Association, both projects partly sponsored by the Seminary.

The students of the second year have been living outside the campus for a whole year. While this promotes a style of living that identifies them with other people in Madurai, the main purpose of the programme is to let the society outside the campus exert an impact on the students and so, on their theological thinking. In



the words of the staff advisers Mr. E. Ramani and Dr. Bas Wielenga this scheme facilitates :

(i) Their maturity in discerning the forces in the society which are instrumental in changing and creating new structures and whose impact affect human development.

(ii) to build up a feeling of security in the absence of such a security that a seminary campus would provide.

(iii) to help make responsible decisions on stewardship, matters of time, money etc.

(iv) to build up relationships with neighbours in 'life-situations'.

(v) to develop a style of life of their own.

(vi) to take the seminary insights into the society and to bring the feed back into the seminary in matters of identification, gaps etc.

(vii) to experience the felt needs of a community for a specialised ministry.

The campus is open to the community outside. The children from the nearby slum come to our crèche. The hostels accommodate students and young working persons. At the slum development office one finds always many friends who have come to discuss some problem or other. The fair price shop extends its services to the outside community. We do not want to foster a ghetto style of community living. Even the eggs and fruits and chicken sold at the gate have some theological significance from this perspective !

We have had a stream of visitors coming to see and encourage our work and we want to thank them all. But at this rate, we may have to open a separate department exclusively for visitors !

### A new style of learning

Let me mention only two aspects in this regard, and elaborate a little bit on them. An effective style of theological learning must be a. *student-oriented* and b. *Praxis-oriented*.

a. In student-oriented learning, lectures and monologues by teachers are reduced to the minimum. Our students, in general, prefer private study, seminar and discussion methods of learning, not to mention some who always want to be dependent on the teacher and are not willing to put maximum individual effort. The final year B.D. students have worked into late hours with their N.T. teacher the Rev. Dhyanchand Carr and have produced a commentary which brings together their own reflection and the best in the different books. This will be the best contextualised commentary for future students.

An exchange programme was arranged with the Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, during the first semester. The students from Jorhat brought much joy and music to our campus and our students who went to Jorhat had an opportunity to learn at firsthand the life of the churches in that part of the country. We would like to continue this type of exchange programmes in future also.

The German classes have been in great demand this year. We were granted permission by the University to start the Higher diploma. These and the M.A. course bring us close to the University and its work. I think we are able to make a special contribution to the Society and to the University through these programmes apart from the benefit and stimulation we receive. We have been able to make a unique impact and receive great appreciation especially this year through the very creative work of Dr. A. Frenz who organized the seminar on 'Justice' and has translated *Thirukural* and *Thiruvasagam*

into German. He was felicitated by persons like Dr. T. P. Meenakshisundaram at the Thiruvalluvar Kazhagam in Madurai and by scholars at Karaikudi.

I am glad to report that many of the teachers also continue to be students ! Apart from the continual non-formal learning of teachers from students, some of the members of faculty are pursuing formal higher studies.

b. Theological education must also be *praxis-oriented*. Praxis is not just activity or action, but a dynamic interaction of action and reflection. Involvement programmes are built into the curriculum so that students can relate themselves to the realities of the life situation.

i. The first observation to make here is that in theological work the unity of theory and practice is very vital. The rarified atmosphere of theological scholarship must be related to the real life of the churches at grass root level. We are reminded by Gollwitzer 'without doubt there is a self-centred pursuit of our academic theology, interested only in its scholarly perfection, and allergic to every reminder of theology's responsibility to the church. It thus forgets the nature of Christian theology as *Scientia Practica* (the Protestant Fathers rightly compared it in this respect with medicine !) and forgets the unity of theory and practice, serving its own selfish whims instead of the whole cause of Jesus Christ'. We are consciously attempting to avoid this danger and to gear the training towards the needs of the Church. Students get opportunities to preach, conduct worship, lead youth groups, teach Sunday Schools, etc. in Churches in and around Madurai, thanks to the co-operation of the churches. From this year onwards each student is assigned 4 or 5 families in the city whom he is expected to visit three times a year, and keep pastoral contact for the whole period of his stay in Madurai. The friends in Madurai welcome gladly this ministry of our students and thus also participate in the training of their future pastors. In November, students and staff visited many of the churches in the diocese. With the encouragement and the blessing of the bishop this has become a very effective means of contact with the churches and of interpreting the seminary's thrusts.

The finance development department's work must be seen in this context not mainly as raising funds that we so badly need, but as building contacts with the members of our churches. We have about 6000 loyal friends of Arasaradi, who help us with their gifts and uphold us with their prayers. They write to us their appreciation and criticism. Mr. S. Suyambu has now become not only an able fund raiser, but also a persuasive theological interpreter. I keep on telling him the latter is the more important.

The Teaching Mission under the imaginative leadership of Rev. Thomas Thangaraj, is in great demand and provides a unique opportunity for week-end concentrated teaching in congregations and living with the people. Through these, students and teachers also come into a creative dialogue with 'parish theology'.

A new programme to encourage Congregational Commitment for Reading was started this year with the help of the World Association for Christian Communication. Mr. Samuel Mathuram one of our external students visited churches and helped to run small parish book shops, encouraging readers' circles and persuading pastors to introduce a book every month in the sermons. This was received well in the churches.

The Theological Education for Christian commitment and Action is another programme that involves us in the life of the churches. This is a programme for the theological education of the laity. After the unexpected



success of the first programme, the Rev. Honest Chinniah, caught the vision of TECCA by TECCA, i.e. that the students of TECCA start their own groups for theologically educating other Christians. We did raise questions whether this is in keeping with the original vision of the TECCA, whether this will help persons to take their vocation of being Christians in the world seriously, and whether this will not make them slip into the easier task of becoming theological teachers (!) and forget their primary vocation. But we were honestly persuaded otherwise. The Rev. Chinniah's report says that the response of the churches reveals nothing less than a movement of the Holy Spirit.

ii. I would like to make another observation regarding *praxis* in theology. Usually, we understand theology's task as interpreting what the church says and believes, or how the church sees society. A new perspective is now emphasised. According to Choan-Seng Song 'In order to do theology, Christian thinkers are now obliged to see, understand and interpret how the world sees the church and how society challenges the church within its own context, to re-examine the message of the Bible and to restate the nature of the Christian faith.'

If this is a valid point of view, the only way to gain this perspective is to be involved in the society around us. Through work in the Subramaniapuram, Mahabopalayam and Heera Nagar slums, through involvement in rural development at Avaniapuram, we hope at least to be able to listen to the questions that society poses to us, so that we can discern afresh the meaning of the gospel.

Having built up adequate involvement projects, we are now struggling with the question, how can this lead on to theological productivity?

Two things, I believe, are essential. First, it is necessary to move beyond involvement to a sharing of the agony of the people. C. S. Song puts it beautifully, 'Aching of heart is the beginning of theology', for, he continues, 'God's heart aches'. An empathic participation in people's suffering, is one factor. Secondly, minds must be trained to be critical and articulate. Where these two are present, there theology is born. I have had some occasions this year to be thankful for, in this respect.

It was a sermon in the chapel the other day. The theme was the knowledge of God. The student preacher expounded knowledge of God as an intimate personal relationship. This meant, he said, 'knowing the heart of God, the heart of God for the world. The Church often fails to know God in this respect, to perceive the depths of God's heart. He went on with an illustration. The scene is that of a bereaved family. The darling daughter is dead and lies dressed up in the coffin; the bereaved father sits silent, deeply immersed in his grief. The little son comes, sees the beautiful dress on his sister and asks the father for a similar dress for himself not realising the grief of the father, nor the seriousness of the situation. The father with a wry smile looks at the child, pitying its naivete and failure to perceive the depths of the father's heart. So does the church find itself, often not being able to know the agency of God for a dying world. And there stands nearby the elder brother, the theological seminaries, spanking the child and chiding the little fellow, for failing to fathom the father's heart. But the father is grieved yet more now, at the incapacity of the older son, to understand the Father's smile or the level of understanding of the little son. Grief upon grief for the father. So the young theologian went on, unlike the older brother, we are called

upon to know the heart of our Father at both levels. Here was theology blossoming out.

iii. One more observation on theological praxis. Theology is concerned not only with understanding God's heart and his will for the world, it is concerned with changing the reality of the world. Theology has to stop explaining the world and to start transforming it. Therefore as Bonino puts it 'Orthopraxis, rather orthodoxy becomes the criterion for theology'. Theologising must lead us on to transforming action. To quote another Latin American theologian Gutierrez 'we can say that all the political theologies, the theologies of hope, of revolution and of liberation, are not worth one act of genuine solidarity with exploited social classes. They are not worth one act of faith, love, and hope committed—in one way or another—in active participation to liberate man from everything that dehumanizes him and prevents him from living according to the will of the father'.

### A New Style of ministry

Our theological education must enable students to be engaged in a new style of ministry. This new style which we would like to foster is, first of all, a *people-oriented ministry*. It is not pastor-centred but people-centred. It must be a ministry that helps the lay person to minister to other Christians and to the world. The pastoral ministry must become an enabling ministry. The pastor is not primarily a benefactor or an administrator, but an enabler.

Secondly, it is a *communication-oriented ministry*. It must help the Christians to communicate the Gospel effectively. The mission institute is training students in different forms of evangelism through their evangelistic campaign programmes. The training in dialogue and the meetings for religious friends revived this year again by Dr. T. D. Francis are helpful in learning how to communicate the Gospel to the intellectuals. There is a programme of co-operation with CACS in training for mass communication. We were very much benefited by the stay of Rev. Wesley Ariarajah of Sri Lanka with us for a month. He gave special lectures and ran a seminar on dialogue, out of his experience in a Buddhist background.

Thirdly, it is a *need-oriented ministry*. The seminary has been involved in identifying areas of need and starting new ministries. The jail work that Bill Harris started and the Adaikala Arulagam that Margaret Harris started are our response to specially felt areas of need. The Harrises left us on 22nd February after long years of dedicated missionary service in the Tamil Church. The unemployed Young people's Association at Thirunagar and the recently started Inba Illam, the Old people's hope at Pasumalai, are also expressions of our concern.

But I would not like you to think that the style of ministry we advocate is an institutionalised one. What we hope is that students would be able to identify areas of need on their own and find adequate solutions for these. A student came to me the other day very sad and angry. He lives off campus. He eats in a hotel, and one day when he threw the leaf in the dustbin he saw a boy trying to redeem it from the mouth of a cow! He has seen so far only boys quarrelling with dogs! It was a revolting sight for him. He was disturbed to the core, and as he related the tale to me his eyes were filled. He is now organising something for these boys and is challenging our community to do something for the hostel dustbin boys at Arasaradi. While my heart grieved with him at the poverty in our society, I was



overwhelmed with the satisfaction of training a future minister, who has open eyes to identify areas of need around him.

Fourthly, it is a *justice oriented ministry*. Christian ministry, if it is a ministry of love, must work for structures which promote justice both in the country and in the world. So in our slum development programmes, self-reliance and people's organization for participation are emphasised very much. Dr. Karl Reus-Smit of Australia gave special lectures in Urbanism and helped us to evaluate the content and style of our involvement work from this perspective. We hope that our students will take this perspective into the pastoral ministry also, and plan programmes of social and political action. I was glad to hear recently that one of our old students in Ramnad District has started a movement against untouchability which is an acute problem there.

Achieving self-reliance and people's participation in decision-making is an extremely slow and difficult process. I had a happy moment when the friends in Ellis Nagar Slum among whom we are working for some time met us the other day. They make beautifully painted clay models and sell them in Madurai markets. The State Bank was willing to give loans and we were also prepared to do so. In the conversation with them the leader said that they would hesitate to take loans because this would make them debtors and might also break the relationship with us. I was struck by their refusal to take loans. I wonder how many of us would refuse loans if somebody offered! These men were growing beyond levels of dependence to levels of self-reliance. They only wanted our help to get land rights from the government. It will be too tall a claim to say that this self-reliance has come about totally as the result of our work. But I did feel that by God's grace we are able to see some results of our attempts.

An exchange programme with the Missions Academy

in Hamburg was organised in which 16 German theologians and pastors came to Madurai and Tamil Nadu, to understand some of the problems of development. The exposure in the parish situation must have helped the members to understand the complexity of the question of development. It was reaffirmed at the evaluation session that self-reliance, social justice, people's participation, liberation and qualitative growth are the essential components of human development.

At the suggestion of the Madurai University, we organized a seminar on human rights day and out of the enthusiasm shown in the seminar, a human rights club has been active since. The members have analysed the manifestoes of the different parties and have created some political awareness in the community regarding the issues at stake in the coming elections.

It is Brunner who said that 'the transfer of faith from the dimension of personal encounter into the dimension of actual instruction is the great tragedy in the history of Christianity! Use 'theology' in the place of 'faith' in this sentence and we can define a tragedy in theology. Theology implies a personal encounter with Christ, rather, an explosive encounter with the risen Christ. I am reminded of Eric Nielsen's advice at the inauguration of the Seminary that this seminary must always have at its centre the faith in the risen Christ. And so the question of a modern theologian-bishop comes again and again upon me. 'Do we affirm the Easter faith in these days, when we insist that God raised Jesus from the dead or when we dare to gamble our lives in the faith that God will raise us from the dead?' Surely theology has a lot to do with that gamble! And if we have managed to challenge at least some students for this gamble of faith, we can be more than grateful.

SAM AMIRTHAM  
Arasaradi.

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## ‘Operation Faithshare’

For three months last year, from the beginning of September, I was in Scotland. We were a team of three, the others being, Mrs. Jyothi Thacker, a Gujarati Christian from the Church of North India and the Rev. James Ukaegbu, a young minister from the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria. We visited eleven Presbyteries, at the invitation of the Church of Scotland. The entire programme was arranged and co-ordinated by their Overseas Council at Edinburgh, through the Presbyteries of Stirling, Paisley, West Lothian, Dunfermline, Dundee, St. Andrews Glasgow, Ayr, Edinburgh, Duns and Buchan. We stayed nearly a week in each area, and people everywhere made us feel at home.

‘Operation Faithshare’ was the name given to our work. Our mission was one of give and take, one of sharing our Christian faith with the vast variety of people we met. Our visits took us from primary schools to Universities and Theological Colleges; from shipyards and factories to prisons, churches and hospitals; from farms and football matches to Missionary Conferences and Rotary Clubs. We spoke in gatherings varying from small house groups and Women's Guild meetings to large rallies attended by more than a thousand people.

Mrs. Thacker spoke of the activities and problems of

the Church in North India, where the percentage of Christians is very much smaller than in the South. She emphasised that Christians should live their faith, since what we are speaks louder than what we say.

The Rev. Ukaegbu, the other member of the team, was a first generation Christian. His father was a pagan priest and chieftain, and nearly 27 years ago young James accepted Jesus as his Saviour. He spoke very forcefully about the need of the Churches and Christians everywhere to be endowed with the Holy Spirit, which is essential for witnessing or faithsharing.

We met many dedicated Christians who had spent most of their lives in the service of God. Many had worked in India, and loved our people. I met the Rev. Dr. A. J. Boyd in Glasgow and the Rev. R. S. Macnicol in Edinburgh. I had studied under them at the Madras Christian College, Tambaram. Others I met included the Rev. R. A. Baigrie and the Rev. Roy Manson, of St. Andrews Church, Egmore, Madras, where I was a member of the congregation. I also met the Rev. Dr. William Stewart of Serampore College, and the Rev. Prof. William Barclay, who after his retirement from the Glasgow University, is now writing an Old Testament Commentary, and a new prayer book. I listened to them and many others, who shared their faith with us.



At Dundee, I met the Rev. and Mrs. Douglas, (Mrs. Douglas before her marriage Miss Shirley Harris) who had worked as a doctor in the Mission Hospital at Kundara. When she came to Kerala, she was required to learn Malayalam, and was advised to go and live with a Missionary lady who knew the language and had retired to a village. I was most pleasantly surprised to learn that the village was my own village of Aymanam, and the Missionary none other than Miss E. M. Dalton, who is carrying on her faithful service, even in retirement.

People were interested to hear about India and the Church of South India. The coloured slides and taped music I had with me were greatly appreciated. Listeners in Scotland were interested in the 3 basic principles our Church leaders had in mind when the CSI was formed, namely, 'In things essential Unity, in things doubtful Liberty, and in all things Charity.'

The chief matter I shared, however, was a miracle that happened in my own family. My second son, who is a junior doctor in Vellore, fell into bad ways and strayed so far away from God that he lost all his values in life. But by the grace of God and by prayer, he is a changed person now. He has given up his bad habits, and now tells others what joy, peace and freedom he has found in Jesus.

Our 3 months in Scotland was a period of true faith-sharing. To quote from a letter received: 'It is not possible to measure the effect of a visit like yours. It was a tonic in itself to meet 3 Christians so full of life and confidence. You have also enlarged the vision of our Church by bringing your own Churches that "wee" bit nearer to us.'

COMMODORE THOMAS J. KUNNENKERIL  
(Retd.)

## Bill and Margaret, Missionaries with a Difference

It was February 22, 1977. A large mixed crowd of people—seminarians and non-seminarians, Christians and non-Christians, rich and poor—was on the first platform of the Madurai Railway Station, some wiping the tears trickling down their cheeks and others trying to overcome their deep feelings of separation with a sense of humour, when the Pandyan Express steamed off with two friends whom they loved most. They were none other than Rev. W. B. Harris and Mrs. O. Margaret Harris, affectionately known to friends as Bill and Margaret. After almost half a century of missionary service in India these friends were returning to their homeland for good.

Bill, after having completed his theological studies in 1937, came to India as a missionary of the Methodist Missionary Society and he served first in the Methodist Church and then in the Church of South India. For many years he taught New Testament in the Tamil Nadu Theological College, Thirumariyur and later in the Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Arasaradi, when the former became part of the latter.

Margaret came to India in 1931, sent from the same missionary society, and she spent almost half the period of her missionary career of four decades in Madras and served the Church in various capacities. The most exciting part of her ministry during this period was, according to her, the period she spent in the rural ministry (1946-1957) in preparing and carrying out the Village Women's Classes. The dedicated services rendered by her during this period are recalled even today by friends who have known her.

Bill and Margaret got married in 1961 and this marked a milestone in their missionary work. They both became one in purpose and zeal in serving the Lord. Bill was a dedicated New Testament teacher, much concerned about the faithful interpretation of the Gospel. Margaret was the 'Florence Nightingale' for the College community, always ready to help, wherever there was need. She prepared a four year syllabus for the wives' programme and gave the women in the

community a happy time by arranging extra-curricular activities. For a few years, Bill was in charge of the In-Service Training Programme of the Tamil Nadu Theological College, Thirumariyur, and during this period, Margaret was a great source of strength and enthusiasm for Bill. Both of them together carried out this ministry very successfully infusing theological interest and awakening among the presbyters.

In 1968, when the Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary came into existence uniting in itself Gurussala and Thirumariyur, the Harrises, too, moved to Arasaradi. This move meant to them God's call for two special ministries—ministry to the prisoners and ministry to the socially handicapped women in society—in addition to their regular teaching ministry.

What was significant about these friends was that they had eyes to see the need in a particular situation and they were willing to do all that they could to meet that need. The new Seminary started functioning and Bill soon found himself drawn into the Madurai Central Jail campus, which lies just in front of the Seminary. He noticed how the condemned prisoners, the lifers and the other prisoners serving their prison sentences of varying durations yearned for love, acceptance and care. It took no time for these prisoners to discover in Bill the friend they needed. I have seen their faces brighten with smiles the moment they see him: some come and fall at his feet, some hug and kiss him, some begin to shed tears.

Bill was their true friend in need. He did not stop with preaching and saying some soothing words, but went ahead to help them in all possible ways. He gave company to the condemned ones even unto the gallows; prepared them for the last day of their earthly existence (some repented of their sins and took baptism just before going to the gallows), went to the jail in early morning hours when they were taken to the gallows, said the last prayer and committed them to the Almighty's care. When a hanging was over, he took the body, and with the accompaniment of some of the



seminary students, went to the native village of the dead man and sometime under bitter opposition from the villagers, gave the man a proper burial. In the case of lifers and other prisoners, he tried to rehabilitate their families, by putting their children in schools and by providing them with some means of sustenance, such as a milking-goat or a sewing machine. The prison work has now become a part of the seminary programme and Bill has shown to our students a new venue for Christian ministry in India.

Margaret, regularly accompanying her husband to the jail, soon realised that she too was treading upon a new area of need where God wanted her service. She used to visit the female section of the jail and there she came across a large number of girls caught up in the immoral traffic in society. In her attempt to help them, she realised how entangled their lives were: a girl is brought to the prison on charge of prostitution; one day someone comes and redeems her claiming himself or herself to be a close relative of the girl, but the girl is deceived and taken back to brothel house. After a few days, the police arrests her again at some street corner or in a brothel house. This routine goes on until the life of the girl is totally ruined.

Deeply pained by this discovery, Margaret wanted to redeem these girls from the clutches of the evil forces in society. She discussed with like-minded friends in Madurai the possibility of opening a home for such girls and soon 'Arulagam', the home for such socially handicapped women, was born on 15-9-1975. The first

few girls, who came from jail, had to live in the house of the Harrises itself until suitable accommodation could be found in the seminary campus. Construction work for adequate buildings for Arulagam has already been started in Pasumalai. Since its inception, Arulagam has fixed up marriage alliances for four girls and has arranged the happy re-union of 24 girls with their respective parents or husbands. At present, there are 24 girls residing in the home. These girls are given training in handloom-weaving, mat-weaving, basket-making, chairs-spinning etc. For girls with some education, other suitable trainings (such as nursing) are also arranged. The goal is that these girls, when they leave Arulagam, should have some means of earning their livelihood.

Bill and Margaret could do all these because of their total commitment to God. In her message to her friends in India, Margaret writes '*Help them (pastors) to live the Godword life, so that they can make the practical "outside" of their lives real and significant*'. They loved India and their identification with the people of India was genuine and complete. In their deep commitment to God, they realised the social dimension of the gospel and challenged the Indian Church with their selfless service to the underprivileged in society. Their services will be remembered in the Church in Tamil Nadu for years to come. They are indeed missionaries with a difference.

Madurai

GNANA ROBINSON

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## Namibia

The President of the United Nations Council for Namibia has issued a statement condemning 'the arrests and intimidation that are being perpetrated against the Namibian people' by the South Africa's regime. The statement also called for international action to end South Africa's illegal occupation of that Territory. There is great danger that the current liberation struggle in Namibia may turn into a civil war with black fighting blacks in a situation similar to the war in Angola.

In 1884 the European powers divided Africa among themselves with South-west Africa going to Germany. Namibia was then not so much a country as a conglomeration of tribes. The only whites in the area were missionaries, and as a result of their activities the whole of Namibia is Christian (Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, and Roman Catholic). Today, the Churches are united in their support for Namibia's liberation. The Germans ruled Namibia until 1915 when they were driven out by the British with the help of the Union of South Africa. After World War I, Namibia was placed under the League of Nations Mandate System with South Africa exercising supervision over its administration until 1966 when the General Assembly terminated the Mandate. Administration of the territory was thereafter to be exercised by the Council for South-West Africa, later renamed the Council for Namibia. Namibia is the only part of the world under the complete jurisdiction of the United Nations. The UN has assumed responsibility for the liberation of the area, for the establishment of an elected government with elections held under UN supervision. South Africa continues to occupy the country with the intention of setting up a Quisling government which South Africa will control. In this

situation the liberation struggle may be converted into a civil war, recreating the same scenario that was enacted in Angola. The South-West African People's Organization (SWAPO) is likely to ask the Organization of African Unity for help. That help would come through Namibia's nearest neighbour, Angola. It should be noted that trans-national corporations based in the UK, Germany, France and the US are much more active in Namibia than the South African government which has been encouraging such foreign investments in order to give other countries an interest in maintaining the *status quo*. Since 1967, the UN has repeatedly condemned South Africa's refusal to comply with its decisions and has demanded, over and over again, that South Africa withdraw from Namibia. In 1976, the Security Council reviewed the situation and decided that South Africa must withdraw from Namibia, release political prisoners and suspend the apartheid laws, after which elections could be held by the UN and a Constituent Assembly set up. The Assembly would then decide on a constitution for the country. Once again, South Africa ignored the demand and the matter still rests with the Security Council. The last resolution of the Council proposing a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa was vetoed by France, the UK and the US. Opening the first meeting this year of the UN Council for Namibia, the Secretary-General described the situation in the Territory as 'Critical', and there the matter now stands.

CPC—United Nations Report

WINIFRED SEIGEL

PHILIP OKE



# Asia Sunday

22nd May 1977

18 years ago, on the Sunday before Pentecost in 1959, the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) was born. Since that historic day, Christians from various denominations in Asian countries have met in ecumenical fellowship and lived in growing unity, helping one another to discover what it means to be Christian communities in our various Asian situations.

The CCA has designated the Sunday before Pentecost, 22 May, as Asia Sunday. On this day, Asian Christians will join in prayers of thanksgiving for this fellowship in Christ.

The Sixth CCA Assembly will meet in Penang, Malaysia, from 31 May to June 1977. Its theme will be *Jesus Christ in Asian Suffering and Hope*. As we pray for the work and witness of the CCA, let us specially commit to God the proceedings of the Assembly.

The Christian Conference of Asia has 16 member councils of churches and 78 churches as members in 17 countries.

The local congregations are requested to pray for their neighbours in other Asian countries.

## *For Australia*

That the unity we seek and realise as Christian churches may promote true human unity, especially between the peoples of Asia.

## *For Bangladesh*

That we as a nation may triumph over our many sufferings, and that the Church may be granted the will and the strength to work for a better tomorrow for all our people.

## *For Burma*

That despite our isolation we may continue to feel our oneness with all who confess Christ, and that the churches may grow in their understanding of God's mission in our struggle for socialist economy and democracy.

## *For Hong Kong*

That the Church may become a neighbour to the poor and to the wider community of Asia.

## *For India*

That those who confess Christ in our country may commit themselves to the service of the dispossessed and hungry, and join them in their struggle for justice and human dignity.

## *For Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea*

That through the efforts for national reconstruction we may achieve reconciliation, and an identity that does justice to the gospel of Christ.

## *For Indonesia*

That our witness to Christ may contribute to the health and strength of our nation.

## *For Japan*

That material affluence may not blind us to our many weaknesses, and to the problems of poverty in Asia.

## *For Korea*

That we may continue to seek new life, for ourselves as Christian people and congregations and for our divided nation.

## *For Malaysia*

That races and religions may live together in understanding and love.

## *For New Zealand*

That we may seek to uphold the rights of minorities and justice for all.

## *For Pakistan*

That we may serve our people in the spirit of Christ and work for the welfare of the nation.

## *For the Philippines*

That we may be the bearers of healing and freedom, seeking in all things the good of all our people.

## *For Singapore*

That economic progress may not be at the expense of human values.

## *For Sri Lanka*

That we may work for reconciliation between races, and commit ourselves as Christ's followers to the cause of human development.

## *For the Republic of China (Taiwan)*

That through our evangelistic mission we may find the will of God for our church and our nation.

For the peoples of other Asian countries with whom we are not in visible fellowship.

YAP KIM HAO

General Secretary

Christian Conference of Asia.



# Pentecost 1977

*Message from the Presidents of the World Council of Churches*

## IMAGINATION IN THE SERVICE OF UNITY

'All the believers were of one heart and mind'! That is how the *Acts of the Apostles* (4:32) describes the first Christian community. How did such diverse men and women from such different backgrounds come to be so united? The answer given is that this was the Holy Spirit's doing.

Today the same Holy Spirit longs to gather the divided churches into a single People of God. Let us, therefore, use this feast of Pentecost to give the Holy Spirit room to work in us and among us, in our hearts and minds. How absurd our divisions are! The only 'reason' we are no longer shocked by the contradiction between these divisions and the Gospel of reconciliation is that we have allowed ourselves to become accustomed to them. But so long as we continue to be divided we deny that Christ really can gather into unity the scattered children of God.

Many men and women have given their lives so that the churches might be united in the Holy Spirit. We have reason to thank God for the better understanding between the churches today. Yet after many years of fervent prayer and patient work our divisions remain. It is almost as if the churches were fearful of the goals for which they strive.

There is no turning back! We must travel to the very end of the road on which we have embarked. None of us is seeking a monotonous and drab uniformity. What we long for is fellowship in the Spirit and in the truth. Today more than ever—when the growing uncertainty about the future can so easily tempt us to withdraw into our separate shells and to leave each other to fend for ourselves—we need a fellowship which demonstrates that our solidarity crosses all human obstacles and frontiers.

Every congregation, every Christian, can play an important part. According to *1st Peter* (2:4-5) we are all called to be living stones of the spiritual house—the *Una Sancta*—the one Church of Christ. Working for unity is like constructing a building, therefore, a building made up of many stones. How can we play our parts? There are endless possibilities.

Why not decide today to take part in a service of worship at a neighbouring church and in this way deepen mutual understanding? Why not decide today to invite to your home someone who is a member of another church, and a stranger to you? Why not show your public support for someone who is in trouble for his or her faith? Why not introduce concrete petitions into your prayers on behalf of churches particularly in need of God's help: churches fighting for just treatment of the oppressed, churches whose freedom to witness to their faith is threatened; churches which have lost their first love and are in desperate need of renewal by the Holy Spirit?

The list of possibilities is indeed endless. Let us, then, ask the Holy Spirit today for the imagination and the inventiveness to carry us forward along the way towards unity in the Spirit.

*The Presidents of the World Council of Churches:*

Hon. President: Rev. Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft,  
Geneva, Switzerland.

Mrs. Justice A. R. Jiaage, Accra, Ghana.

Prof. José Miguez-Bonino, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Metropolitan Nikodim, Moscow, USSR.

Dr. T. B. Simatupang, Jakarta-Pusat, Indonesia.

Archbishop Olof Sundby, Uppsala, Sweden.

Dr. Cynthia Wedel, Alexandria, Va., USA.

## NOTICES

### ASIAN INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

P.O. Box 180, TRIVANDRUM-1, KERALA, INDIA

Director: HOBEL G. VERGHESE, M.A., M.Litt, M.Ed.

Applications are invited from eligible candidates for admission for 1 year (6 months class room courses; 6 months practical field training Diploma course in Christian Education which will be commenced its first session in the middle of June 1977. The main areas of study are Christian Education, Contemporary Christian Approach & Modern Communication Methods.

Candidates must be born again Christians who believe that Christ is the only way to salvation and have call to work in the non-Christian areas in South and South-East Asian countries. The minimum qualification will be graduate degree (B.A., B.Th., B.D. etc.) in Arts, Science, Theology or equivalent standard.

Since this is not a Bible College, students are expected to know the Bible—Old & New Testaments to certain extent even if not proficient.

The medium of instruction will be English. Some scholarships are available to needy students.

The application forms and prospectus are available from the undersigned: Completed applications should reach on or before 20th May, 1977.

REGISTRAR,

ASIAN INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION,  
P.O. Box 180,  
TRIVANDRUM-1, KERALA, INDIA.

### CSI CHARISMATIC CENTRE, KOTTAYAM

Designed to transform groups and churches into power stations and help who have hungry hearts to be filled with the Holy Spirit and experience pentecostal power of that of the Apostolic age. Release of the Holy Spirit moving on fire the fire of love possessing our possession and victorious living. Conducting revival and healing meetings and fasting-cum-prayer vigil of the upper room experience. For further details contact Rev. V. M. David, c/o CSI Diocesan Office, Chetty Street, Kottayam-686 001.



# Jesus Christ in Asian Suffering and Hope

Edited by J. M. Colaco, 95 pp. Rs. 9.00 1977. The Christian Literature Society, Madras.

The Theme of the Christian Conference of Asia brings to the fore the challenge to the Asian Church today. This Book aims at promoting thinking and discussion on this theme and it does so most satisfyingly.

'The Asian Reality—Some Economic and Political Trends' by the Rev. K. C. Abraham touches the overall complex picture of the countries of Asia going through periods of transition, their struggles and problems, the masses awakening to political rights, their critical scrutiny of old values and the common problem shared by all these countries—the eradication of poverty. Conflict arises from industrialisation and urbanisation clashing in priorities with the lack of basic necessities in the rural areas, the poor becoming poorer and the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few. The writer makes studied references to the harmful effects of foreign aid, the different kinds of democracies choking basic freedoms under the guise of stability, the evolution of new ideologies incorporating elements from indigenous sources, and concludes that to bring about any meaningful change in Asia, suffering and Hope will have to be discussed in the context of the misery of poverty, unequal distribution and unemployment brought about by the elitist dominance over a mass majority. Rev. Abraham's paper in less than four pages portrays a true and telling picture of the economic and political trends in Asia relating it to Suffering and Hope, for guided thinking at the 6th Assembly.

Mr. John Augustine's paper, as he himself introduces it, is an attempt to highlight the structure of inequality in Indian Society with a view to pointing out the directions of change so that the Christian Church can play a more constructive role. He points out the unique features of Indian society as influenced by the hierarchies of caste, class and power strongly entrenched especially in the villages of India. He goes on to trace the changes taking place in this context and to alert the Church to join the secular forces and agencies of change, shaking off old patterns of oppression and inequality perpetuated by tradition.

A grim case study is depicted by the third paper called 'Poverty and Oppression at Erranyapallaya' by Sister Gladys D'Souza who writes in a very forthright manner and a style developed with feeling. It champions the cause of the poor villager against the powerful selfishness of wealthy landlords and focuses the struggles of generations. Until oppressive tenancy, exploitation and dehumanization are broken, Suffering in the Third World countries will continue and grow.

Miss Padmasini Asuri, a Government of India Regional Home Economist rightly spotlights the miserable lot of Rural Woman in India today. At places the paper tends to stretch the case a bit. That the rural woman is overburdened and neglected by her man who is said not to care for her at all, that her work at home or in the field is not compensated for in terms of money, that she is a non-person, and leads a drab existence, has no comforts, no identity and so on can equally apply to many an urban woman. It is too much of a generalisation. That woman is already contributing to the collective

wealth of the nation cannot be and is not denied. The country should make it worth her while. The vignettes of the rural Indian woman might easily describe a woman in the slums of Europe, America and the U.K. The tenor of this paper sways more towards the emotional than the realistic.

The Rev. Dr. Michael Prakash Samartha adds a valuable paper on the Understanding of Suffering in non-Christian Religions—rather, a study of the common elements among the different religious aspirants striving together to alleviate human suffering. In the course of this study understandably there is a great deal to be said about the abject poverty common to all Asian countries, oppressive social and economic structures, international rivalries and exploitations and finally spiritual emptiness in the midst of material affluence. The exposition of the attitudes of Hinduism or Buddhism or Islam in this situation is crisp and excellent. One can understand better the non-Christian reactions to the burning issues of our time. Dr. Samartha points to a realistic approach to the problem of Suffering in Asia.

Juxtaposed with this chapter is one on the same subject by Dr. S. Amirtham, as brought out by the Prophets of the Old Testament with plenteous quotations from the O.T. A scholarly paper by a specialist written for specialists and its entire thrust—and this is where it is invaluable—is in its relevance to those concerned with Suffering as revealed in the Old Testament. The role of the prophet—that of the suffering medium, bringing salvation through his vicarious suffering is the parallel for the Church Today to adopt. Share and be part of the suffering and hope even though the Church in Asia is in a minority situation.

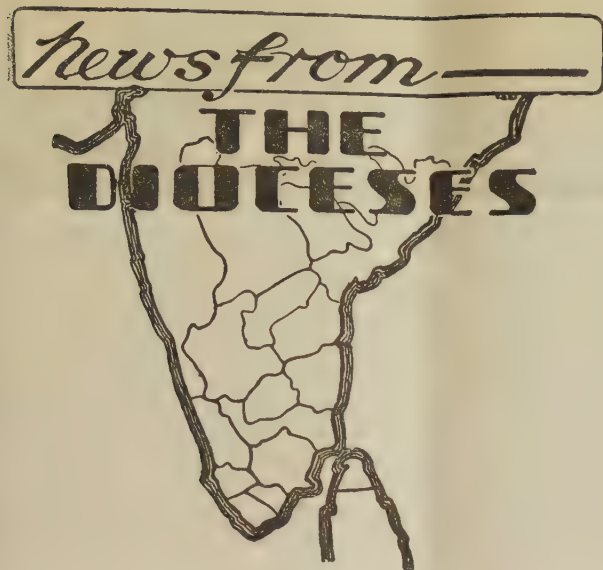
The Biblical Meditation by Metropolitan Paulos Gregorios is a study in Hope relating to the Cross and the Resurrection. To Asian Christians the message is to discern and support the signs of the kingdom in contemporary history and to overcome and banish evil and death with hope expressed in the midst of suffering which comes through identification with the victims of evil and injustice. Such suffering is borne only because of Hope.

The final chapter in the book, again underlines the gospel of Hope against a background of pain and suffering. As the writer, Dr. Victor Premasagar says, The Bible itself, the Book of an Asian religion, grapples with this problem in the Book of Job, the servant passages and in Jesus reaches its climax through His Sufferings for others. While critical of some of the attitudes of the Church, this paper is an eye-opener. The minority nature of the Church makes it introverted and narrows its services within the limits of its membership. The Church has not opened itself up to enter into the mainstream of the national life. In general this may be the truth. In his appraisal of the implications for the Church Dr. Premasagar dwells on the Servant Church, the Fellowship of the Church, the Church as a Worshipping Community, the Church as the Sign of the New Humanity and Salvation as Humanization. In order to renew and revitalize

(Continued on p. 12)

[MAY 1977]





### RAYALASEEMA DIOCESE

The annual retreat for the Bible women of Rayalaseema Diocese was held this year in Cuddapah from 28th February to 7th March. Retired Bible women were also invited and about 30 women had a time of meditation, discussion, fellowship and freshment together. Rt. Rev. L. V. Azariah and Rev. B. Satyaprakasham led the Bible study. Meditations were led by Sister Jane Moses and Dr. Krista Kupfernagel. Miss Hawkings spoke on the Holy Spirit and the Charismatic movement, Miss Williamson on the Christian Counselling course in Vellore and Sister N. Mariamma on the Jubilee of the Sisters of the CSI. During the week the Bible women had opportunity to learn new songs and share news of their work in various parts of the diocese.

Several sisters of the CSI were present for part of the retreat and took part in the commissioning on 6th March of two new Sisters—Sister T. O. Rachel and Sister Ch. K. Saramma. They were given the cross of the Order by Sister Rachel John. Both the new Sisters have worked as Bible women in Rayalaseema Diocese for many years and we are sure that they will continue to serve our diocese well. Seven women were also received by the Bishop as associates of the Order.

The Cuddapah hostel boys entertained the Bible women with sketches and acts on Saturday evening and college students also provided an evening of entertainment on Sunday. The Cuddapah hostel students have responded to the Synod's appeal for fasting in order to support some project. While fasting they entertain themselves with sketches, skits, songs and dances. On this occasion the Bible women were invited to watch their efforts which were very humorous and talented and greatly appreciated by the audience.

A visit was arranged to the Children's New Life Centre, Kamalapuram. This was the first New Life Centre to be started in India in June 1970. Children

aged 9 years come from a few villages in the area for 3 years. When they return to the villages they continue to do agricultural work alongside their parents, but with the benefits of literacy, good farming techniques, animal husbandry, nutrition etc. A second New Life Centre, Rayalaseema Diocese, was started in Nandikotkur in 1973 and now a third, in Muddanur was opened on 14th March, 1977. It differs from the other two in that Hindus and Muslims are included as well as Christians and it is only part of an Integrated Community Service Project. This project has a community health and development section as well as the New Life Centre and a Crèche (latter yet to be started). Mr. J. H. S. Ponnayya, Additional Director for Agriculture in Tamil Nadu visited the New Life Centres last year and prepared a detailed report, drawing up policies and giving suggestions for the future development of such projects. The Integrated Community Service project is also indebted to him for his advice. This project, as well as the New Life Centres, is being supported by Kindernothilfe. Mr. Luder Luers, the General Secretary of Kindernothilfe in Germany writes 'This combination of various types of institutions gives wonderful opportunities for taking new life, hope, justice and development into neglected backward rural areas.'

E.S.W.

### CLERGY RETREAT

It was an occasion of great joy and abundant blessings when 132 clergymen of the diocese met for their annual retreat from 7th to 9th March 1977, in the premises of the school for the deaf, Palayamkottai.

At the outset, Bishop Daniel Abraham emphasised the need and importance of the retreat with illustrations from the life of our Lord. Bishop Ambalavanar the main speaker emphasised that the retreat was an opportunity to see the local tasks in the context of the total mission. He spoke on (a) the context of our ministry, (b) the minister's task, (c) The minister's character, (d) Eucharistic Ministry.

God has called us to live in harmony with His creation. But we were like the prodigal sons (Luke 15), the younger son, wasting the father's resources and the elder son who could not be at home in his own house. The answer was to be found in the Son who broke the mother's heart to fulfil the father's will (Luke 2:42-52). He helped us to make our message relevant to the people of the space age of the twentieth century.

During the retreat, we had the opportunity to discuss the following issues: Retreat for pastorate workers, conventions, Sunday schools, work among youth and children.

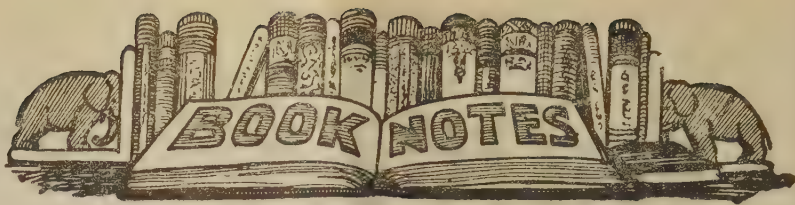
The after-dinner films screened by the Youth for Christ were much appreciated.

R. JOSEPH,  
Tuticorin.



## RECONVERSION TO HINDUISM THROUGH SUDDHI

By J. F. SEUNARINE, The Christian Literature Society, Madras, 1977, pp. 105, Rs. 8.



The *Suddhi* ritual symbolizes the vitality and dynamism of renascent Hinduism. It is of crucial importance to Hindus and non-Hindus alike. The non-Sanskritic traditions within Hinduism strive to maintain their identity against the forces of Aryanization and the non-Hindu minorities in India are always on guard against the super assimilating power of resurgent Hinduism.

The author, J. F. Seunarine, has an interesting background apart from his sound academic training. We gather in the preface of the book that he is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church. He also admits that he has felt a strong pull towards Hindu religiosity, being the son of a converted Brahmin. The topic, however, is presented with remarkable objectivity.

The first part of the book (ch. 1, 2 & 3) deals with the life of Dayananda Sarasvati (1824-1883), the founder of the Arya Samaj, against the background of various missionary movements within Hinduism in modern times. The fourth chapter contains an eye witness account of a present-day *Suddhi* ceremony observed in the city of Bangalore. The sprinkling of the purificatory water, investiture with the sacred thread, teaching the new convert how to chant Gayatri mantra are some of its highlights. The fifth chapter is the most important chapter in the estimation of the reviewer. The author ably brings out the several implications of the *Suddhi* movement in this chapter. The last chapter, 'The Understanding of *Suddhi*' deals with the different patterns in which it has revitalised Hinduism.

The author first traces the *Suddhi* ritual to the Vedic tradition and then attempts to legitimize its practice in modern times. But the arguments put forth by the author are not very convincing. For instance, basing himself on the opinion of another scholar named Kane the author maintains that the ancient law-givers like Manu and Yajnavalkya declare, 'what is given by force, what is enjoyed by force and all transactions that are brought by force are void.' The author seems to stretch the spirit of this ancient law to justify the modern practice of reconversion to Hinduism. But whether Manu or Yajnavalkya had in mind the question of reconversion when they made such a statement is highly questionable. Similarly, while legitimizing *Suddhi* to modern times the author argues on the basis of social mobility. Quoting from the Aitereya Brahmana he cites the instance of a slave who later became an *acarya* and wrote some of the *suktas* of the tenth mandala of the Rig-veda. *Suddhi* ceremony, the author maintains, has uplifted thousands of people and given them a new social status. Therefore a case of legitimacy is made for *Suddhi* upon the vedic grounds. The author's argument from the particular to the general is too abrupt, his contention lacks material evidence.

As already mentioned the fifth chapter is the real contribution of this book and brings out the several implications of the *Suddhi* movement. The Hindi language together with the Devanagari script has provided a cultural identity to modern Hinduism but at the same time it has alienated the Southern States. Further, although the Arya Samaj has produced several out-

standing freedom fighters, their concept of Hindu Raj based on ethnic, linguistic and Aryan ideals has divided the country in more than one way. The author rightly emphasises the important role played by the Arya Samaj in bringing about social reforms. Swami Dayanand and his followers did their level best to emancipate women, give education to girls, arrange re-marriages for widows and provide work opportunities for women so much so that Dayanand himself was mistaken for a Christian missionary agent! All this in a way closed the door to Christianity because what Christianity had to offer was not too different from what the Arya Samaj stood for.

In a book of this nature one would expect a critical inquiry into the relevance of some of the Vedic norms to the present-day conditions. For instance, cow protection is a resurrected Aryan symbol. But when people die out of starvation, a deeper and relevant question should be whether Hinduism should stick to it out of sentiment or look for new symbols. Yet the book is valuable because of its faithful and objective presentation of the *Suddhi* ceremony in all its aspects. It abounds in quotations and opinions of other scholars, carefully selected and documented all serving to point out to the reader the depth, magnitude and the manifold implications of this *Suddhi* ceremony.

DR. M. P. SAMARTHA,  
Bangalore.

### A Special Review—(Continued from p. 10)

the Church the Unity of the Church is as important as the need for an indigenous, efficient and locally supportable new pattern of Ministry. Theological education should be revamped and serious thought given to Dialogue with other Faiths and to the roles of Women and Youth in the Church. Ordination of Women has brought about heated arguments in Diocesan Councils and it speaks well for the Church of North India that the vote was in favour of the Ordination of Women. As always the North takes the lead in India, for in Christ as we are reminded in Gal. 3 : 28 there is neither Jew nor Greek,

bond nor free,  
male nor female  
for ye are all one in Jesus Christ.

This paper gives constructive direction to the Traditional Church.

There is an elaborate and very useful Bible Study Outlines prepared by the CCA at the end of the book. This deceptively slim volume with an eye-jolting jacket packs in its pages a bulk of thought-provoking material and though, as the Rev. Alexander John says in his Introduction to the volume, it hopes to promote study and discussion leading to concrete action aimed at the CCA Meeting in Penang, this is a collection of probing thoughts that every right minded human, Christian or not, Asian or European, can well read if he is a part of God's world and humanity at large.

—LALITHA MANUEL.



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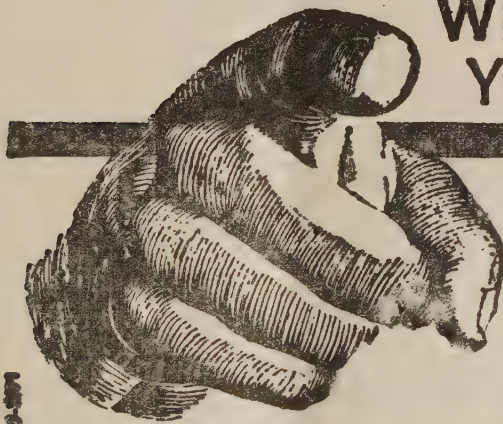
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